

Don and Martha Hanson, of Decorah, Iowa, sold some logs from their hardwood timber a few years ago and figure they need to put as much back into the land as they have taken from it. That's one reason the Winneshiek County farmers developed a conservation plan and entered an EQIP contract in 1998 to protect and improve 134 acres of forestland.

The fencing and timber stand improvement work is helping improve their land and the water quality in nearby Coon Creek, a coldwater "put and take" trout stream. Grazed timberland Fayette soils like those on the Hanson farm can erode at rates up to 25 tons an acre, sending high sediment loads into coldwater streams.

As part of their EQIP contract the Hansons have installed about one mile of new fence to keep livestock out of 134 acres of timber, and are removing damaged trees to improve 17 acres of hardwood forest. The Hansons say the 75 percent cost-share offered by EQIP was attractive.

The Hansons, who have been district cooperators since 1983, have done an excellent job of protecting the natural resources on their 555 acre farm, says Todd Duncan, NRCS District Conservationist in Winneshiek County. Through the years the Hansons have utilized the technical assistance of the NRCS and Winneshiek County SWCD to install conservation practices such as terraces, grassed waterways, contour stripcropping and conservation tillage, and have also enrolled land in the Conservation Reserve Program.

"During my first visit to the Hanson farm many years ago it struck me as a farm that had been handled with a lot of care," said Duncan. "The EQIP program has given the Hansons the financial ability to practice that care on the woodlands."

The Hansons are happy with the benefits they're getting from EQIP. "I'm not sure we will get to see the walnut, white oak, ash and other hardwoods harvested, but they will be there for our grandchildren," says Hanson. "On the other hand, the wild turkey, pheasant, deer, grouse and other wildlife protected by the timber are here right now to enjoy."

Donald & Martha Hanson, Winneshiek County

Timber improvement

*“The wild turkey, pheasant, deer, grouse
and other wildlife protected by the timber
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—Donald Hanson, landowner*



Left: Landowner Don
Hanson removes a dam-
aged tree as part of their
timber management plan.
Above: Don and Martha
Hanson.

helps wildlife